

**OPENING STATEMENT OF**  
**THE HONORABLE VERNON J. EHLERS**  
**RANKING MEMBER**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH & SCIENCE EDUCATION**  
**COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY**  
**U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

*The National Nanotechnology Initiative Amendments Act of 2008*

April 16, 2008  
10 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
2318 Rayburn House Office Building

Thank you Chairman Gordon. I am pleased that the Committee is holding this important hearing today.

The purpose of this hearing is to discuss draft reauthorization legislation designed to improve the management and coordination of the cross-agency National Nanotechnology Initiative (NNI). Of particular interest to this Committee is the prioritization of environmental, health and safety (EHS) research and communication of that research to the public.

Since the original Act was put in place in 2003, we have heard from a number of witnesses that EHS research may need to be increased to ensure a steady pathway for both the nano-industry success and public acceptance of new technologies. Consequently, I am pleased that the draft legislation elevates the EHS component of the NNI. At the same time, I want to make sure we craft policy which allows for EHS research to be embedded into product development. We know that each nano-product and process may behave differently, and therefore independent EHS research may not always inform a seemingly parallel project.

I am also interested in hearing from our witnesses about some of the proposed changes to nanotechnology education, particularly the changes to existing education programs at the National Science Foundation. Given the challenging funding environment for these programs, I want to make sure such changes would benefit students and classroom teachers and not eat away at other important programs.

I look forward to hearing the insights of our witnesses on how we can strengthen the National Nanotechnology Initiative so that the United States can remain a leader in nanotechnology. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.